



Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2023

Pearson Edexcel Extended Projects Qualification
in Artefact (P304)
Paper 01

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Publications Code P304_01_2306_ER

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Student Performance

We continue to see very impressive work at the top mark range and learners achieving high marks for all assessment objectives. This is perhaps because of experienced centres and very dedicated learners pursuing projects linked to their personal passions and progression plans.

There were again few examples of very low marks. In general, the learners that are entered plan, research, develop and produce an artefact.

The unit is accessible to learners of differing ability and larger cohorts included a range of marks.

Suitability of work submitted

The projects submitted included suitable examples of software design, architecture, product design, engineering, advertising, website, photography, film, literary, music technology, visual arts and textiles outcomes. This series we also saw AI programmes as artefact outcomes.

Sustainability was a popular theme. With this focus, learners were often able to develop suitably focused design and commission briefs. The final artefacts frequently provided innovative solutions to address the impact of climate change and/or conserve resources.

Most centres supported learners to develop proposals that necessitated a clear research phase. Most of the work sampled reflected the Guided Learning Hours of the qualification.

On the whole learners submitted appropriate proposals and evidence for the Artefact unit. There were a few instances of learners not defining and focusing on an artefact outcome from the outset. There was very occasional entry of more ephemeral outcomes that could have been better conceived as P303 (Performance) projects.

Sometimes the planning and the structure of the supporting materials were better suited to a Dissertation outcome. In these instances, less effective evidence was presented in the form of an essay/dissertation/literature review with the later addition of an artefact. This could be because centres are modelling a response for a Dissertation as part of the taught course. Therefore, centres are advised to ensure they guide learners to produce appropriate evidence for the demands of the Artefact unit.

Some centres are 'over' evidencing this unit and providing large portfolios that far exceed the recommended word count. Information tended to be repeated in

different sections of the portfolio. This had a negative impact as the portfolio overall was less coherent and supporting materials less clear.

Generally, learners developed a suitable initial design brief and/or specification as opposed to a question as their starting point/project title. This enabled them to focus effectively on the design and production of their artefact. There was a tendency for those who used a question as their title to focus disproportionately on an issue, problem or theme rather than the research and methods required to develop and produce an artefact.

Highly refined initial briefs offered learners the greatest opportunity. Where consideration was given to specifics such as style, medium, influence, purpose, materials, genre, user-group etc. learners were able to plan, research, develop and evaluate with all these in mind. Examples of more focused initial titles/design briefs included:

- To design and produce a women's Victorian inspired garment that satisfies the sustainable clothing ideals of today's society, while still having an appealing and affordable price point
- Create a machine learning model that analyses and classifies MRI brain scan data to aid the diagnosis of neurological diseases
- To design an eco-friendly care home in Henley-on-Thames.

Most centres included the required Project Proposal Form and Activity Logs on the Pearson pro-forma.

Stronger responses often recognised the validity of documenting relevant primary research including the development of technical skills and research into existing similar products/designs. Occasionally individuals did not appreciate the technical skills required to realise an appropriate Level 3 artefact and/or the time and support needed to develop these skills.

Some effective supporting materials were less formal in their presentation, but still structured. They were in the most appropriate form for the artefact outcome (e.g. annotated sketchbooks or design portfolios). Centres should be confident to reward this type of evidence when it meets the assessment criteria. Detailed Activity/Production Logs also often provided effective evidence for all objectives. Some centres included photographs key stages of the process with commentary in the Log. This provided effective evidence.

The switch to electronic submission sometimes impacted on the quality of the evidence of the final artefact. There were instances of centres not initially submitting evidence of the final artefact or only providing poor quality black and white images that did not necessarily show the artefact being used/displayed as intended. Centres are also strongly advised to include filmed evidence of the artefact in use, where

appropriate. Some centres made good use of PowerPoint to include images from the design portfolios in their supporting materials. Time lapse photography was also used effectively to show development.

Most centres recognised the need to provide evidence of both presentation skills and review. Occasionally Oral Presentation Record Forms were not included or fully completed with mark band placement and commentary.

Assessment Evidence

Most learners submitted individual projects. There were very few group projects submitted. Centres are reminded that it is an essential requirement and made clear in the specification that learners in group projects 'must produce their own individual evidence for the entire project that can be assessed independently of others' contributions.'

AO1

Some Project Proposals were very detailed, with all sections on the form completed fully. There were some good examples of Project Proposal Forms showing refinement rather than just a 'first draft' approach. Some plans were completed in brief, and this provided weaker evidence for AO1. Sometimes titles had not developed from initial vaguer questions into refined briefs.

Proposals were particularly effective when they included a detailed breakdown of the activities that would be completed with the time allocated to specific tasks clearly identified. Sometimes very generic main activities were listed, with more consideration of completing paperwork, than planning and managing the research and development of a specific artefact. Centres are reminded that it can be beneficial to update/amend the Project Proposal Form once the brief has been finalised.

Activity Logs provided stronger evidence for AO1 when they were detailed, reflective and included commentary on how the process was managed. Less effective Activity Logs included brief and limited, often weekly or monthly entries. When learners simply identified the activities, they had completed there was less to reward. References to any problems and how they were keeping 'on track' and meeting initial timescales and deadlines tended to be less frequent.

When AO1 was over-rewarded initial proposals and time planning were less detailed and focused than the mark suggested. Where there was slight lenience, it was also often due to more limited and narrative records of activities. Better assessment considered the full range of marks in the top band and the planning documentation as well as the learner's independence and overall management of the project.

AO2

There were examples of excellent primary and secondary research being conducted and used effectively. The initial research included existing products, the issue to be addressed or the needs of the client, different equipment or materials and various techniques that could be used. On-going research also informed the iterative design and development process. In some examples where evidence was less strong, learners conducted more arbitrary desk-top research around a theme.

AO2 research was sometimes 'narrower' than the centre mark suggested. Sometimes there was over-evidencing of AO2, to the detriment of time spent on the development and realisation of the Artefact (AO3).

Some learners did not reference consistently within their work or produce a bibliography which provided less evidence for AO2, as the bibliography is part of the marking criteria in all mark bands. There was sometimes a lack of awareness of the need to cite the sources of images used in the supporting material or indeed the final artefact.

When AO2 was more leniently assessed it was often because there was a disconnect between the research and development of the artefact itself. Learners had focused on more academic research around a theme or topic, rather than investigating the materials and techniques required to create the artefact. This led to less understanding of the complexities of the research and resources required and a tendency to collate information in more linear Literature Reviews. Occasionally additional research was 'retrofitted' into the project at the end of the process and after the artefact had been completed and could not be rewarded.

There continues to be an Increase in the use of Literature Reviews. These sometimes clearly developed the learners' skills for progression and were used effectively to show appropriate secondary research. Centres are reminded that there is no specific requirement to produce a Literature Review for this unit and it sometimes led to repetition of information and less focus on the investigation into 'materials and techniques' that is demanded by the P304 mark scheme.

Primary research was often very pertinent, but not all centres seemed to encourage it. This approach was very useful for artefact projects when learners could use information from visits, workshops, interviews, online tutorials, experiments and testing to inform the development processes in AO3.

AO3

At the top end students demonstrated a high level of technical skill and produced very successful outcomes. There was evidence of genuine innovation as students created new artworks, designs and products.

The strongest evidence for AO3 was provided by learners who had produced a highly successful artefact that was supported by detailed evidence of how the

artefact was produced. Some learners produced highly successful artefacts, but the evidence of the developmental process was much less strong. In the best examples, learners produced detailed commentary on the different processes they had completed including the problems they had encountered and the solutions they had used to overcome them. This was often further supported by detailed justification for the different decisions they had taken as artefacts were refined during the process. This sort of commentary provided strong evidence for AO3. Detailed Activity / Production Logs sometimes effectively captured the alternative and evolving designs, as well as the application of the researched processes and materials.

Many learners produced a report/essay and although not always the best approach to show development these were generally appropriate and also informed the evaluations in AO4. When learners provided a retrospective account of the process, it could often have been supported by more detailed on-going recording of the process in the Activity Log. This could provide the opportunity to capture key developmental decisions, the selection and rejection of alternative ideas and the refinement of the artefact. Indeed visual evidence was highly useful to support this AO such as annotated design work, screenshots of software development, drawing /sketches as ideas evolved etc. Recorded evidence was also occasionally to show testing stages as well as the final outcomes, and this was effective.

Some centres presented very brief if any supporting materials. This led to more significant lenience in the assessment of criteria related to the learners' understanding of the development process and consideration of alternatives.

There was sometimes lenience in the assessment of AO3 when shorter development and realisation phases did not reflect the increased weighting allotted to this objective. There was less recognition of the necessity for learners to undertake and document a multistage development process and interrogate alternatives, before refining the outcome through test pieces or prototypes. More limited marks were justifiable when learners did not show evidence of the consideration of alternative ideas and proceeded quickly with one more straight-forward initial idea.

At the top-end, the accurate use of technical language and explanation of underlying principles, concepts and techniques suggested more thorough understanding.

Learners continue to sometimes erroneously present background research essays into the theme of their project, rather than an in-going narrative of the creative journey towards the production of their artefact.

Some centres appear to be over-rewarding the outcome. This was particularly the case when there was less evidence of the process presented in the supporting materials. The quality of the outcome was also sometimes over-rewarded.

AO4

There was evidence that very nearly all learners had presented their project outcomes. A presentation was the most popular format and this sometimes provided weaker learners the opportunity to better focus their evidence and also generate evidence for AO2 and AO3.

Oral Presentation Records and copies of the PowerPoint presentation slides were usually included. However, a significant number of centres seemed to base their AO4 mark on the presentation alone, rather than fully considering the quality of review in the overall mark. Generally, this series the summative written review was an area of development for many centres as they tended to be over-rewarded. Where there was slight leniency against AO4, centre assessors could often better consider the full range of marks in the top band.

At the top end, high-level review and insight was embedded throughout the portfolio. More detailed written summative review tended to enable learners to demonstrate the top band criteria. When the summative review was briefer and assessor comments suggested there was more evidence in the presentation, this could have been more robustly demonstrated through the inclusion of speakers notes/scripts or a recording.

Centre Performance

Most centres were accurate or slightly lenient in their assessment of P304. It was clear that many learners had been very well supported by experienced and newer centres who are confident with the assessment process. It was pleasing to see that in all centres, the project was being completed as an independent piece of work with learners having the freedom to pursue an area of interest to them, and a suitable platform to extend their skills for progressions.

Where there was very occasional inconsistency, with a mark difference outside the typical centre range, this was due to a lack of internal moderation and/or learners submitting entries with a less focused artefact outcome. Indeed, fewer centres seemed to provide evidence of the internal moderation of marks. This is an area for development in centres.

AO3 was most likely to be leniently assessed, and when the content and/or outcome reflected band 2 rather than band 3.

Centres are advised to double-check that the uploaded electronic evidence includes all items listed as Project Contents on the Candidate Record Sheet. The following issues were quite common and should be addressed:

- key documents such as Oral Presentation Record Form or Activity Logs not submitted for individual learners

- documents not fully scanned and so pages omitted
- an excessive number of individual documents per learner, with photographs of individual pages of evidence, rather than a single PDF or film of visual evidence
- Learner and centre details not included on key documents such as the Candidate Record Sheet.

Some centres did not upload a complete sample, including the work of the highest and lowest marked student. There was varied practice in the labelling of electronic documents and centres are advised to ensure they read the guidance.

Most centres linked their teacher assessor comments to the language of the assessment criteria on the Candidate Record Sheet as required, rather than providing personal qualitative judgments. Occasionally assessors used Dissertation, rather than Artefact Unit marking grid descriptors. Comments from internal moderators justifying any amendment of centre marks supported the moderation process well.

Sometimes, the required 'best-fit' approach was not used. This was apparent when a mark was placed high in a band, despite assessor comments accurately highlighting where the evidence met lower band descriptors.

There were sometimes errors in the submission of marks. The marks submitted online did not correlate with the mark on the Candidate Record Sheet. There were also sometimes calculation errors when totalling up the marks.

Centres are encouraged to ensure they access their E9 report, as this will enable them to address any issues and guard against the upward creep of marks.

Centres are commended for continuing to support the very wide-ranging interests of enthused learners.

